

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 OMB-01 RSR-01 /103 W

----- 098172

R 310606Z JUL 73 ZDK

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9665

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PK

SUBJECT: PUNJABI MUSICAL CHAIRS

BEGIN SUMMARY: MAJOR TOPIC OF POLITICAL SPECULATION  
IN LAHORE THESE DAYS IS WHICH PUNJABI PPP LEADERS ARE  
LIKELY TO RETAIN OR GAIN PROMINENCE IN ISLAMABAD AND  
LAHORE AFTER MID-AUGUST PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

1. AS CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS MOVE CLOSER  
TO MID-AUGUST PERIOD WHEN NEW CONSTITUTION TO BE ADOPTED,  
TEMPO OF LOCAL SPECULATION, CONCERNING WHICH PUNJABI  
LEADERS ARE GOING TO END UP WHERE, IS DAILY INCREASING.  
SUBJECT IS CHOICE TOPIC IN LAHORE THESE DAYS AND WE  
HAVE HEARD LARGE AND VARIED NUMBER OF RUMORS ABOUT  
CHANGES TO BE EXPECTED IN PROVINCIAL AND CENTRAL GOVERN-  
MENTS.

2. PUNJABIS IN THE CENTER: WILDEST RUMOR BUT ONE WHICH  
PERSISTS IN MAKING THE ROUNDS IS THAT BHUTTO WILL DECIDE  
AT LAST MINUTE THAT HE CANNOT GIVE UP PRESIDENCY WITH  
ITS TRAPPINGS AND WILL THEREFORE ENGINEER PUNJAB GOVERNOR  
GHULAM MUSTAFA KHAR INTO PRIME MINISTERSHIP. ARGUMENT  
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USUALLY PUT FORWARD TO SUPPORT THIS RUMOR IS THAT BHUTTO

COULD KEEP REAL POWER IN HIS HANDS WITH KHAR SERVING AS PRIME MINISTER BUT WOULD BE FAR ENOUGH REMOVED FROM DAILY GIVE AND TAKE OF POLITICS THAT HE WOULD ENJOY GREATER FLEXIBILITY THAN AT PRESENT. OUR JUDGMENT: NOT A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY; PPP AND RESPECTED APOLITICAL SOURCES DISMISS THIS.

3. SHEIKH MOHAMMAD RASHID, DR. MUBASHIR HASAN, MAULANA KAUSAR NIAZI, AND RANA MOHAMMAD HANEEF ARE LIKELY TO RETAIN THEIR PRESENT PORTFOLIOS. OTHER PUNJABIS RUMORED AS STRONG PROSPECTS FOR CENTRAL CABINET SEATS ARE PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER MERAJ KHALID, PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURE/INDUSTRIES MINISTER NAWAB SADIQ HUSSAIN QURESHI, MIAN ARIF IFTIKHAR, AND DR. GHULAM HUSSAIN, ADVISOR TO GOVERNOR KHAR. KHALID WAS CENTRAL FOOD MINISTER BEFORE TAKING HIS PRESENT POSITION. SINCE HE IS CERTAIN TO BE REPLACED HERE (SEE BELOW) A CENTRAL CABINET SEAT WOULD BE BOTH LOGICAL AND GRACEFUL; HE IS ALREADY A MNA. QURESHI HAS BEEN RUMORED LOCALLY TO BE UNDER CONSIDERATION TO REPLACE RAISANI AS CENTRAL FOOD MINISTER. IFTIKHAR, NEW SENATOR FROM LAHORE (LAHORE 0796), IS STRONGLY FAVORED IN THE LOCAL RUMOR MILLS AS LIKELY TO RECEIVE A CENTRAL MINISTERSHIP WHEN BHUTTO ANNOUNCES HIS NEW CABINET. DR. GHULAM HUSSAIN, MNA FROM JHELMUM AND FAVORITE TROUBLESHOOTER FOR GOVERNOR KHAR, IS FREQUENT SUBJECT OF LOCAL RUMORS ABOUT PUNJABIS LIKELY TO END UP IN CENTRAL CABINET POSITION.

4. PUNJAB PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT: GOVERNOR KHAR WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BECOME CHIEF MINISTER OF THE PUNJAB. HE HAS TOLD ME THIS HIMSELF SOMETIME BACK AND SOURCES CLOSE TO HIM CONTINUE TO STATE IT AS FACT. HE DOES, OF COURSE, FACE THE PROBLEM OF GETTING HIMSELF ELECTED TO PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT NEW CONSTITUTION WILL PERMIT HIM TO RETAIN HIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS WHICH PRESUMABLY GIVES HIM AMPLE TIME TO GET HIMSELF ELECTED IN A SAFE PROVINCIAL SEAT. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE LITTLE IF ANY CHANGE IN KHAR'S MANDATE, MODE OF OPERATION, PERSONAL STYLE, OR RELATIONSHIP WITH BHUTTO.

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ONE EMBELLISHMENT IN LOCAL RUMOR FACTORY IS THAT KHAR WILL MANAGE TO GET THE RULES CHANGED SO THAT, AS CHIEF MINISTER, HE CAN CONTINUE TO LIVE IN ELEGANT GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

5. OUR SOURCES AGREE THAT SEVERAL OF THE STRONGER PROVINCIAL MINISTERS WILL RETAIN THEIR PORTFOLIOS: INFORMATION MINISTER MUMTAZ AHMAD KAHLOAN (ALSO SAID

TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION OF DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER); FINANCE MINISTER HANEEF RAMAY; COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER MIAN IFTIKHAR TARI; AND EDUCATION MINISTER DR. ABDUL KHALIQ. PPP MPA LEADER SHAUKAT MAHMOOD AND PARTY WORKHORSE RAUF TAHIR ARE REPORTED TO BE LIKELY CHOICES FOR PUNJAB MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS.

6. COMMENT: LAHORE RUMOR MILL CHURNS ON. SOME CHANGES MAY OCCUR IN THE ABOVE LISTING SINCE PUNJAB POLITICS RETAIN A HIGH MEASURE OF UNPREDICTABILITY. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSIGNMENTS ALSO INEVITABLY LEAVE RESIDUE OF IMPORTANT POLITICOS WHO MUST BE PAID OFF IN SOME MANNER. TYPICAL CURRENT EXAMPLE OF THIS IS MIAN MOHAMMAD AFZAL WATTOO, MINISTER OF LABOR, WHO HAS BEEN APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF PUNJAB PPP. NEVERTHELESS, WE EXPECT MAJORITY OF ABOVE PREDICTIONS TO HOLD UP.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 31 JUL 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** garlanwa  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
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**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 132  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** garlanwa  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 04 JAN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <04-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <18-Jan-2002 by garlanwa>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PUNJABI MUSICAL CHAIRS BEGIN SUMMARY: MAJOR TOPIC OF POLITICAL SPECULATION  
**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, PK  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005